

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DLOS-09
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R 211530Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4959
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USAFE RAMSTEIN
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 5715

USNMR SHAPE FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EFIS, UR, NO
SUBJECT: GREY ZONE AGREEMENT DEVELOPMENTS

REF: OSLO 5392

1. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ANNOUNCED ON MONDAY, DECEMBER
19 THAT SOVIET FISHERIES MINISTER ISHKOV WILL COME TO OSLO JANUARY
10-14 FOR A MEETING OF THE JOINT NORWEGIAN/SOVIET FISHERIES COMMISSIO
N
TO DISCUSS 1978 BARENTS SEA FISHING QUOTAS. THE MFA PRESS SPOKESMAN
ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THE FISHERIES PROTECTION ZONE AROUND SVALBARD
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ESTABLISHED UNILATERALLY BY NORWAY LAST JUNE 15 WOULD BE DISCUSSED
AT THIS TIME AND THAT THE AGREEMENT CONCERNING PROVISIONAL FISHING
REGULATIONS IN THE QUOTE GREY ZONE UNQUOTE WOULD BE SIGNED IN
OSLO DURING THE COURSE OF THE MEETING (BY ISHKOV FOR THE SOVIET
UNION; NO STATEMENT AS TO WHO WILL SIGN FOR NORWAY).

2. PRIVATELY WE HAVE LEARNED FROM MFA AND FISHERIES MINISTRY

SOURCES AND FROM LOS MINISTER EVENSEN'S STAFF THAT IN FACT THESE ISSUES ARE NOT AS NEATLY DISPOSED OF AS THE ANNOUNCEMENT IMPLIES. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, THE GREY ZONE AGREEMENT, ACCORDING TO A STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON NOVEMBER 28, WAS TO HAVE BEEN SIGNED IN MOSCOW BY ISHKOV AND NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR GRAVER IN EARLY DECEMBER. WHETHER OR NOT THE SOVIETS ACTUALLY AGREED TO THIS PROCEDURE, IN EARLY DECEMBER THEY PROPOSED TO THE GON THAT QUOTE BECAUSE OF THE AGREEMENT'S IMPORTANCE TO OUR OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONS UNQUOTE IT SHOULD BE SIGNED AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL BY BOTH COUNTRIES. THEY FURTHER PROPOSED THAT ONE WAY TO DO THIS WOULD BE TO HAVE ISHKOV LEAD THE SOVIET DELEGATION TO THE JOINT FISHERIES COMMISSION MEETING IN MID-JANUARY, IN OSLO, SO THAT HE COULD SIGN THE AGREEMENT AT THAT TIME. ALTHOUGH THE GON REALIZES THIS BUILDS UP THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AGREEMENT, AFTER SOME DELAY, THEY HAVE AGREED TO THE SOVIET PROPOSALS.

3. OUR SOURCES EXPLAIN THAT THE DECISION TO DO SO WAS TAKEN FOR TWO REASONS. EVENSEN HAS MADE A SERIES OF TRIPS TO MOSCOW IN CONNECTION WITH NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE GREY ZONE AGREEMENT AND A RETURN VISIT BY ISHVOK WOULD GIVE DESIREABLE PRESENTATIONAL BALANCE. MORE IMPORTANT, THE GON AT THE LAST JOINT COMMISSION MEETING INFORMED THE SOVIETS THAT NORWAY WANTED TO BRING UP THE SVALBARD FPZ UNDER OTHER BUSINESS AT THE NEXT JOINT COMMISSION SESSION. THE SOVIETS DID NOT REJECT THIS PROPOSITION AND THE GON NOW SEES THE ISHVOK VISIT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE FPZ AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL. WHILE MFA AND FISHERIES
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MINISTRY SOURCES AGREE THAT FORMAL SOVIET CONCURRENCE IN THE FPZ IS NOT LIKELY, THEY BELIEVE A QUOTE WORKING SOLUTION SHOULD BE IN THE CARDS. UNQUOTE.

4. THAT SOVIET FISHING AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS WOULD BE SERVED BY A MANAGEMENT REGIME FOR THE SVALBARD COD BREEDING GROUNDS IS UNDERSTOOD HERE. HOWEVER, IT IS ALSO APPRECIATED IN THE CONCERNED MINISTRIES THAT THERE IS A BROADER SOVIET POLITICAL INTEREST IN CONSTRAINING NORWAY'S SVALBARD ROLE. THUS, DESPITE THE MFA ANNOUNCEMENT AND THE HOPE FOR A QUOTE WORKING SOLUTION, UNQUOTE IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT ISHKOV MAY NOT AGREE TO DISCUSS THE FPZ AND, IF WILLING TO DISCUSS IT, MAY NOT AGREE TO ANY FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION.

5. TO ADD TO THE GENERAL CONFUSION SURROUNDING ISHKOV'S VISIT, PRIME MINISTER NORDLI IN A PRESS CONFERENCE DECEMBER 20TH STATED THAT THOUGH ISHKOV HAD BEEN INVITED TO OSLO, HE HAD NOT RESPONDED TO THE INVITATION (DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE ISKOV VISIT WAS A SOVIET PROPOSAL AND THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THE VISIT THE PREVIOUS DAY). WE UNDERSTAND FROM FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES THAT ONE REASON FOR THIS LATEST WRINKLE MAY BE THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE TOLD THE

NORWEGIANS ISHKOV IS WILLING TO COME TO NORWAY TO DISCUSS FISHERIES ISSUES WITH EITHER THE FISHERIES OR LOS MINISTERS AND HE IS NOT WILLING TO COME FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

6. COMMENT: IF THE RUSSIANS HAVE INDEED TOLD THE NORWEGIANS THIS, IT MAY REFLECT AN ATTEMPT BY THE RUSSIANS TO INTERVENE ON EVENSEN'S SIDE IN THE ONGOING STRUGGLE BETWEEN EVENSEN AND FRYDENLUND FOR BUREAUCRATIC CONTROL OVER THE SENSITIVE NORWEGIAN-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS ON THE BARENTS SEA BOUNDARY. WE WOULD IMAGINE THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD PREFER TO HAVE EVENSEN NEGOTIATE NORTHERN ISSUES THAN FRYDENLUND HAVING HAD A RATHER MORE FAVORABLE (FROM THE SOVIET POINT OF VIEW) OUTCOME IN THEIR PREVIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WITH EVENSEN. IN EFFECT THEN THE
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SOVIETS MAY BE SAYING THAT ISHKOV IS WILLING TO COME TO OSLO AND IMPLYING THAT HE MIGHT EVEN BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE FPAZ, BUT ONLY IF HIS INTERLOCATOR IS EVENSEN. THAT IN TURN MIGHT BE THE BEGINNING OF THE SOVIETS ATTEMPT TO BROADEN ISHKOV-EVENSEN FORUM TO OTHER NORTHERN ISSUES INCLUDING CONCEIVABLY THE BARENTS SEA BOUNDARY.

7. IN ANY EVENT THE NORWEGIANS DO FACE A REAL DILEMMA ON THE FPZ WITH THE SOVIETS SINCE BY ARRIVING AT A WORKING SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS, THEY RISK RE-EMPHASIZING BILATERALISM IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS ON NORTHERN ISSUES.
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